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SUBJECT: AU THINKING ABOUT DARFUR-DARFUR DIALOGUE, BUT  
STILL NO CHAIRMAN

REF: A) Khartoum 1428 B) State 98519

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The AU has not yet identified a suitable candidate to lead the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue, AU Special Representative Kingibe told CDA Hume, but it has started thinking about possible candidates, as well as models for discussions. Kingibe also thanked the United States for a recent USD 300,000 DRL grant to support the process. The AU was making some progress on other aspects of Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) implementation as well, holding the first meeting of the Ceasefire Commission under the DPA and planning for the first meeting of the Joint Commission on June 24. (The United States has yet to designate a representative to the Joint Commission). SLA leader Abdul Wahid al-Nur's opposition to the DPA was becoming untenable, Kingibe added, noting that Fur tribal leaders were starting to exert pressure, and that the recent Eritrea-Sudan summit might also have an effect. END SUMMARY.

Some Progress on Darfur-Darfur Dialogue

¶2. (SBU) Charge d'Affaires Hume met with AU Special Representative in Sudan Kingibe and AU Mediator Ibok on June 17 to discuss Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) implementation and check the progress of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC). Hume mentioned that the Department had recently approved a USD 300,000 DRL grant for the DDDC (Ref B), and asked whether the AU had identified a suitable candidate to chair the process. Kingibe welcomed the news, noting that Italy had recently donated USD 250,000; as the DDDC becomes more inclusive and longer lasting, it will also likely become more expensive. The AU had thought about several former African presidents as one option, but had yet to make a decision. He asked the Charge if he had any ideas. Hume replied that a former president would need patience, because the chairman would have to take a large amount of abuse from the parties--and a former president might not appreciate that type of treatment. Ibok added that the candidate should understand the neighborhood and the culture, and suggested using the Inter-Congolese Dialogue as a model for discussions: "The Chairman stays in his office while his people work with the parties in the back room." The DDD chairman will not be chosen at the July 1 AU Summit in Banjul, Ibok added, but through an "administrative process" within the AU.

Government Gives Airtime for DPA, but Charges for it

13. (SBU) Kingibe summarized recent AU efforts in Darfur, noting that the Government had given the AU 2 1/2 hours of airtime each week on local radio stations to help explain the DPA. The problem, Kingibe explained, was that the Government then asked the AU to pay for the airtime--and since the AU had not budgeted for the expense, it had dropped the program. He also asked rhetorically whether the AU should be accepting space on government radio, since the people would then see the spots as government propaganda.

14. (SBU) Kingibe also recounted his recent visit to Darfur, in advance of AU Commission Chairman Konare's visit on June 20-22. Kingibe had met with both Foreign Minister Akol and Interior Minister Taha prior to his visit, who advised him to "listen to the people;" when he arrived, Kingibe discovered that "the people" kept saying the AU was wonderful, that there was no need for the UN, and that AMIS should be strengthened. Kingibe laughed at this exercise, but was more concerned that the Government was trying to speed up implementation of the DPA to take control of the peace process. He also noted that the Governor of North Darfur was mobilizing IDPs to oppose the DPA, since after Mini Minnawi's signature, the North Darfur governorship was the position most likely to be "shared" with the rebels.

First CFC Meeting; Joint Commission to Meet June 24  
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15. (SBU) Kingibe also discussed the recent Humanitarian Cease Fire Commission (CFC) meeting in El Fashir, noting that it was "very delicate." The JEM representative insisted he was there only to discuss CFC issues, not DPA

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ones, since the JEM had not signed the DPA (Ref A). However, Kingibe said, he had been able to massage the issue and coaxed the JEM delegate into participating; Hume agreed, noting that the Abuja talks took precedence over the N'Djamena ones, and there should be no ceasefire violations. Until the JEM and SLA/Wahid sign on the DPA, the AU will have to follow a two track process for the HCFA and the DPA, Kingibe added, noting that the first meeting of the Joint Commission would likely be on Saturday, June 24. (Note: The United States has yet to designate a representative to the Joint Commission).

Wither Abdul Wahid?  
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16. (SBU) Hume mentioned that he had met earlier in the week with several Fur tribal leaders close to SLA Commander Abdul Wahid al-Nur, and that he expected to meet with other prominent locals during his trip to Darfur next week. (Post will report on the meetings septel). Kingibe laughed, remarking that "they seem to be making the rounds." Nur's position was becoming untenable, Kingibe suggested. In fact, Nur may soon be "sacrificed on the altar of realpolitik," Kingibe joked, now that his frequent host, Eritrean President Assaias, became "chummy chummy" with Sudan President Omar al-Beshir during last week's summit in Khartoum.

HUME